

JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

Chairman:
Tsunetaro Miyakoda

*Published by the Commission on Public Relations
of the National Christian Council of Japan*

Editors:
Kaname Tsukahara
Peyton Palmore III

CABLE CODE: JAPACONCIL, ADDRESS: CHRISTIAN CENTER, 2, 4-CHOME GINZA, TOKYO, JAPAN

Subscription Rates: Japan ~~¥1,000~~ Foreign (Sea mail) ~~\$3.00~~ (Air mail) ~~\$3.00, plus additional postage~~
¥700 \$2.00 \$3.50

No. 64

July 1, 1955

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FAITH IN THE WORKING PLACE - Kyodan plans for Occupational Evangelism

Under this theme, thirty five members of the Kyodan Occupational Evangelism Committee met on the 14th through the 16th of this month to evaluate their work and plan for the year ahead. (see JCAN 2/1/55 pp. 1-2) The National Committee members, the chairman of the Committee in each Kyodan district and some especially active workers in occupational evangelism made up the group which met at Hakone Seifuso.

Dr. Emile Brunner spoke on "A theology for Vocational Evangelism. Prof. Matsui, the head of the Economics Department at Doshisha gave his observations of his recent trip to Europe and America, relating what he saw to our needs here in Japan. A layman, Mr. Isamu Kato, the President of the Oil Workers Union, spoke on "Christianity and the Working Man".

Eight points may summarize the significance of the meeting:

1) A new chairman, Rev. Mr. Matsumoto was elected to the National Occupational Evangelism Committee. Mr. Matsumoto is the pastor of the Enshu Church in Hamamatsu.

2) A new sense of the Occupational evangelistic effort being one part of the total evangelistic outreach of the church was gained in this meeting. The theme of the Centennial year "Go with Christ" will also be the theme of this Committee.

3) Again they will try to make clear the meaning of the first Sunday in September as Labor Sunday.

4) The Labor Gospel School has proven itself to be effective. It should be utilized in more churches and communities.

5) A Young Christian Workers Movement is underway as one method of occupational evangelism.

6) Audio Visual aids specifically prepared for use in this field are now being developed.

7) The Committee will strongly urge the institution or the strengthening of a course in Occupational Evangelism in each of the three Kyodan seminaries.

8) As a project during the coming year, an effort will be to establish an Institute of Industrial Relations using the resources of the seminaries and colleges to provide our churches with factual information which will help them to understand the workers and reach them with the Christian Gospel.

NCC AND THE JAPAN EPISCOPAL CHURCH - continued cooperation

During the Lenten season the members of the Japan Episcopal Church (Seikokwai) contributed to a sacrificial offering for the work of the church. During this period, the more than 33,000 members of the 298 churches contributed a total of ¥1,050,000 (about \$2,800). Of this amount, more than 1/10th (¥110,000) was contributed to the Centenary Movement of the NCC. This is only one example of the fine spirit of cooperation with which the Seikokwai is cooperating in the ongoing work of the NCC.

The Centenary Movement was first suggested by the NCC several years ago. Although NCC is planning an over-all strategy, each constituent body has a large part of the responsibility for planning and carrying out the Movement within its own group. Since next spring (1956) is the time for the last quadrenial General Meeting of the Seikokwai before the Centennial, it will be at his meeting that plans are set up for the participation of this group. To this end, the summer meeting of the Department of Evangelism will carefully make preparatory plans.

SOUTHERN BAPTIST FEDERATION - worldwide activities

Two years ago the Southern Baptist Federation of Japan organized a special Study Commission on Social Problems. Last year, after much discussion they agreed on a statement opposing the use of the Hydrogen bomb, and sent it to the head of state of each country engaged in the making of such weapons. In essence, the statement declared that the making of the Bomb was both against humanity and against the will of God. It requested that the

heads of state work among their people and the rulers of the world to do away with this menace.

Since then, an answer has been received written in the name of the Queen of England. She said that she respected the spirit of the statement and request and is working to make it unnecessary to have such weapons so that they may be eventually abolished.

On June 30 - July 1, the same Study Commission is giving report to the staff and leaders of the Federation. Later, the report will be revised and published. The report deals with three problems which are crucial in the thinking of Japanese today:

- 1) The Japanese economy is caught up in strong international currents today. How can Japan act to strengthen her desperately weak and dependant economic position?
- 2) In view of the conflicting affirmations on co-existence by the two great powers today, what is the Christian Theological standpoint on co-existence?
- 3) Asian countries are caught up in a time of revolution and self assertion. What should be Japan's relation to these countries?

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Three outstanding leaders in the Southern Baptist Federation in Japan have just left to fly to the Baptist World Alliance in London, the middle of this month. (see JCAN 6/15/55 p 5) Rev. Sadamoto Kawano is one of the Vice Chairmen of the World Baptist Alliance. He is also Vice President of Seinan Gakuin, a Baptist college in Japan. Rev. Noboru Arase is the General Secretary of the Southern Baptist Federation in Japan. The third delegate, Mr. Katsuji Sugimoto is a layman in the Church. He is the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Seinan Gakuin.

INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN COOPERATION -- a grass roots project

On May Day 1952 students and laborers marched through the streets of Tokyo with placards saying "Yankee Go Home". They overturned American cars on the street and fought a pitched battle with police on the Imperial plaza. The demonstration was whipped up by skilful Communist agitators and propogandists, but they were using a very real factor as their basis of agitation, The growing resentment against the abominable moral conditions around the American military bases.

The same year, two moves by Christian forces in Japan tried to do something constructive about these conditions. Mrs. Kubushiro with the help of interested friends started the Christian Friend's Home in Kure, where there were military camps of five nations. Here, programs in Japanese culture, art, music and tradition were given and Christian fellowship between Japanese and military personnel was fostered. This was a "venture of faith" with a small budget but great hopes.

About this same time the NCC Social Problems Committee moved to create a special "Military Base Problem Committee" (Kichi Mondai Iinkai). This Committee contacted the NCCC in America asking for financial assistance and personnel in order that a definite, large, coordinated program between the Japanese Christian Church and foreign military personnel might be worked out.

As a result of this kind of constructive thinking and acting in the face of admittedly difficult conditions, there are now three centers, with plans for two more where the Japanese Christian Church is working in coordination with the Chaplains of military bases to bring better conditions. This is the first time in the history of nations that there has been an attempted coordination of foreign service personnel and the indigenous Christian Church to form on an organized basis off-base centers for fellowship, fun, entertainment and worship. Since it is such a pioneer work, there have been many occasions for misunderstanding and many new roads that have had to be carefully explored.

However, as a total project, it has gone well. At present there is one American couple, Rev. and Mrs. Norman Koehler, who are serving both as program coordinator and as directors of the Christian Servicemen's Center in Sasebo. This town is reputed to have the worst moral conditions of any Base area in Japan. The heartaches of the workers are many but the few boys who's lives are helped by the Christian program is a wonderful source of rewarding joy.

In addition to Sasebo, there is work being done at Kure and Tachikawa; and work is being organized at Sendai. Plans have been made for a center at Fukuoka but are being held up in hopes that English speaking personnel can be found to make the work truly bi-lingual. It has been found that the centers are most effective when there are both English speaking and Japanese speaking personnel in the directorship.

LACOUR RETURNS - 34 workers and 23 centers

Returning for the third mission in five years, Mr. and Mrs. Lacour have come with 32 co-workers from churches in America to carry on the work started in Fukushima prefecture last summer (see JCAN 9/1/54 p 4) and to start work in two new areas.

Mr. and Mrs. Lacour and a few helpers came to Japan on their first mission in 1950 when they made a musical tour of the country using a station wagon and a specially built house trailer which doubled as a stage. During five months they held 177 meetings in 153 towns, performing and speaking to about 530,000 people. Last summer they came with 24 co-workers and centered their work in Fukushima Prefecture. The strategy was to make a real impact in this one area by concentrating their effort. Ten centers were started and already one has become self supporting.

This summer, and probably for the next several summers, these ten centers in Fukushima will be followed up on. In addition,

three new centers in the Tokyo area and ten new centers in the Osaka-Kobe area will be started. At each center an American pastor, a Japanese theological student, and a nearby Japanese pastor will cooperate for a period of intensive evangelism which will be followed up during the coming year by the Japanese workers. Thus, the intensive effort of this summer will be only the beginning of a continuing work in the years to come.

In addition to the pastors working in each center, there will be three traveling musical bands made up of both Japanese and American musicians. These bands will work in coordination with the centers being started by the Lacour Mission and also will appear in already existing churches in the area. They will make their witness to Christ through music and song.

The Lacour Mission has its headquarters in the Christ Newspaper. Mr. Tomio Muto, the Editor of the Newspaper, is the Executive Secretary of the Mission. It is working in direct co-operation with the N.C.C. Centenary Movement.

PROGRAMS TO THE PHILIPPINES - AVACO goes international

An agreement was made recently with Rev. William E. Schubert, Director of the Chinese-Japanese Division of the Far East Broadcasting Company (Manila) for the use of several of AVACO's radio programs for broadcast to Japan. AVACO will send programs which have formerly been broadcast in Japan, including "Uncle Sekiya", "Sunday Music (Bach)", and "The Stories of Great Hymns". FEBC is broadcasting to Japan two hours a day by shortwave. When returned, these tapes will be made available by AVACO for hospital and other evangelism.

IN HIS STRENGTH - Fellowship of Christian Missionaries to meet

In 1902 "The Standing Committee of the Co-operating Christian Missions in Japan" was organized to "Promote fellowship, education, and inspiration among missionaries." More than fifty years later, having gone through two changes of name and two world wars, it is still functioning for the same purpose in this country. This year its annual conference will be held at Lake Nojiri July 28-30.

Five hundred or more participants are expected to take part in the three day conference under the theme In His Strength. Missionary leaders from areas all over Japan and from many different communions will bring messages of inspiration, addresses, and Bible study. Mr. and Mrs. Godfrey Buxton who are on a round-the-world-trip in connection with the Officer's Christian Union and the I.V.C.F., will give a witness of sharing the Word in many lands. Among other offices, which he holds Mr. Buxton is Chairman of the British Home Council of Japan Evangelistic Band.

Those who would like to stay in the Conference Hotel are urged to make their reservations with Mrs. Hilburn, 116-6, Aoyama Minami cho, Minato ku, Tokyo, not later than July 5th.

